

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

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R 170725Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7387

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 3066

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CZ

SUBJECT: RUMORS OF A STRIKE

1. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN TOLD BY A RELIABLE LOCAL SOURCE THAT A SIT-DOWN STRIKE OCCURRED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AT A LARGE FACTORY IN PRAGUE. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, MANAGEMENT OF THE LARGE CKD PLANT ATTEMPTED TO REDUCE JOB CLASSIFICATION OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS BY ONE GRADE LEVEL, WHICH MEANT FOR AFFECTED WORKERS A LOSS OF 300-500 CROWNS PER MONTH. WORKERS REPORTEDLY STRUCK FOR A DAY AND A HALF IN PROTEST. PRAGUE PARTY BOSS KAREL KAPEK APPARENTLY CAME TO FACTORY, WHERE HE WAS FORMERLY GENERAL MANAGER, AND HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH FACTORY MANAGEMENT, MEMBERS OF FACTORY PARTY APPARATUS, AND ROH (TRADE UNION) OFFICIALS, BUT NOT DIRECTLY WITH WORKERS.

2. FEW HARD DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE, NOR CAN WE EXPECT MANY MORE. WE DO NOT KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER THE JOB RECLASSIFICATION WAS RESCINDED OR ENFORCED. NOR DO WE KNOW EXACTLY HOW MANY WORKERS WERE INVOLVED. ONLY TWO WORKSHOPS FROM ENTIRE FACTORY WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED, WHICH INDICATES A MAXIMUM OF 500 WORKERS.

3. COMMENT: PERHAPS NOT TOO MUCH SHOULD BE MADE OF THE FACT THAT KAPEK INTERVENED. ANOTHER PRAGUE PARTY BOSS, WITHOUT KAPEK'S OLD CONNECTIONS WITH THE FACTORY, PROBABLY

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WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO. NOR DO WE KNOW YET IF THIS WAS ONLY

AN ISOLATED INCIDENT, THE RESULT OF A MISALIGNMENT OF JOB SKILLS
AND GRADES IN A SINGLE FACTORY; OR WHETHER THIS MAY PORTEND
GOVERNMENT INTENTION TO MOVE AHEAD ON A GENERAL RESTRUCTURING
OF WAGE SYSTEM. WE SUSPECT THE FORMER, BUT ARE ON LOOKOUT
FOR SIGNS OF LATTER.
PERRY

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NNN

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